

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A process for preparing a multilayer piezoelectric device with
alternating piezoelectric ceramic layers and base metal layers as
electrodes comprising the steps of:
- 10 (a) applying onto a first layer, which includes a piezoelectric
ceramic material and a first combination of organic
materials, a second layer, which includes a base metal
powder having particles, which are coated with material
capable of protecting said base metal against oxidation, and a
15 second combination of organic materials, to produce a first
structure;
- 20 (b) applying onto said first structure a second structure, which is
identical to said first structure to produce a multilayer
structure;
- 25 (c) heating said multilayer structure at a temperature less than
600°C to remove said first and second combinations of
organic materials and their decomposition products such as
carbon to levels below 200 ppm; thereafter
- 30 (d) sintering at a temperature from about 600°C to about 1050°C
at a partial pressure of oxygen from about 10^{-3} to 10^{-15} atm to
produce said multilayer piezoelectric device with alternating
piezoelectric ceramic layers and base metal layers as
electrodes .

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said piezoelectric ceramic material is selected from the group consisting of PZT, PMN, bismuth-based piezoelectric materials, and lead-free ceramics based on BaTiO₃.
- 5 3. The method of claim 1, wherein said base metal is selected from the group consisting of Cu, Ni and alloys thereof.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said first combination of organic materials includes binder, solvents, plasticizers, dispersants, and combinations thereof.
- 10 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said base metal coating to protect against oxidation is selected from the group consisting of glasses, metal oxides, organic material, noble metals, and combinations thereof.
- 15 6. The method of claim 1, wherein said second combination of organic materials includes solvents, binder, and combinations thereof.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein said heating is at a partial pressure of oxygen from about 10⁻⁴ atm to ambient atm.
- 20 8. The method of claim 1, wherein said heating is at a temperature from about 25°C to about 500°C.
9. The method of claim 1, further including a cool-down step of said sintering at a partial pressure of oxygen below 10⁻⁴ atm.
- 25 10. A multilayer piezoelectric device with alternating piezoelectric ceramic layers and base metal layers as electrodes prepared by the process of claim 1.
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11. The device of claim 10, wherein said piezoelectric ceramic material is selected from the group consisting of PZT, PMN, bismuth-based piezoelectric materials, and lead-free ceramics based on BaTiO₃.
12. The device of claim 7, wherein said base metal is selected from the group consisting of Cu, Ni and alloys thereof.
13. The device of claim 7, wherein said first combination of organic materials includes binder, solvents, plasticizers, dispersants, and combinations thereof.
14. The device of claim 7, wherein said second combination of organic materials includes solvents, binder, and combinations thereof.